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DC General
Family Shelter

Homeless Children's
Playtime Project

WE'RE BUILDING A PARK

pg 5



"It's hard to help a kid
understand why they don't
have a playground"

- Heather Wade

PLAYGROUND FOR DC GENERAL
COMING OCTOBER 2014

Directed by June Locker, supported by parents and people like you. Doctors have noted a higher prevalence of asthma and obesity among homeless children because of unstable housing situations, unhealthy diet, and the lack of a place to play and exercise.



6 Thrifty woman sees possibilities others overlook.

8 Anthony Crawford looks back on a happy year in his home.

14 Terron Solomon weighs the difference between vending Street Sense and panhandling.

COVER ART

Playground at DC General family shelter expected by fall.

PHOTO BY HANNAH ROOP

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OUR STORY

Street Sense began in August 2003 after Laura Thompson Osuri and Ted Henson approached the National Coalition for the Homeless on separate occasions with the idea to start a street paper in Washington, D.C.

Through the work of dedicated volunteers, Street Sense published its first issue in November 2003. In 2005, Street Sense achieved 501 (c) 3 status as a nonprofit organization, formed a board of directors and hired a full-time executive director.

Today, Street Sense is published every two weeks through the efforts of four salaried employees, more than 100 active vendors, and dozens of volunteers. Nearly 30,000 copies are in circulation each month.

How It Works

Each vendor functions as an independent contractor for Street Sense. That means he or she re-invests in the organization with every purchase.

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The Empowerment Plan

By Sarika Reddy, Editorial Intern

Veronika Scott was always told that her organization would fail. As a product design student at The College for Creative Studies in Detroit, Scott created The Empowerment Plan, a nonprofit dedicated to providing jobs for women experiencing homelessness as well as cold-weather protective gear for people living on the streets.

Critics told her that her idea would never work -- not because she had no business experience, but, rather, because "the homeless women she hired would be worthless." Scott and the wonderful women working for her proved them all wrong.

In the bitter Detroit winter, the homeless need protection. And when Detroit shelters are too overwhelmed to provide it, the women of The Empowerment Plan do. The organization hires women from local homeless shelters and pays them to produce coats that transform into sleeping bags. The versatile items are then distributed to the homeless for free.

The goal of the organization is to help women and their families break out of the cycle of homelessness and provide comfort against the elements for those who are still experiencing it. The organization is backed by an experienced staff with diverse skills, as well as a board of directors. But the project would be nothing without the bright-eyed, hardworking seamstresses who are simultaneously helping the homeless and themselves.

The Empowerment Plan has been featured in major news outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *CNN*, and *Forbes*.

Students Pack Love for Homeless Veterans

By Eilidh Jenness, Editorial Intern

On July 15th, over 220 Bank of America Student Leaders gathered at the American Red Cross in the District to assemble care kits for area homeless veterans.

Through the bank, the young volunteers find opportunities and internships in their neighborhoods they can use to gain experience while bettering their communities.



By the end of the day, the students had finished over 3,000 care packages.

The students' participation at the American Red Cross was part of the Totes for Hope program, which provides baskets of personal care items such as shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant and shaving cream to American veterans in need of



the supplies.

The totes also include a personal note of gratitude to the men and women who have served in the armed forces.

New items for the totes can be donated to any local American Red Cross center.



DC On Track to End Veteran Homelessness by 2015

By Rachel Cain, Editorial Intern

According to an article in *The Washington Post*, DC is in line with the national plan developed by the Obama administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs and several other related agencies to end all veteran homelessness by 2015.

Between August 2013 and March 2014, Veterans NOW, a DC-based coalition of local and federal service providers, succeeded in housing 409 veterans, including 199 chronically homeless veterans. The results from the coalition's latest campaign will be released soon.

Veterans NOW estimates a total of 1,625 veterans will require housing assistance in order to meet the goal of ending

veteran homelessness in DC by 2015.

Jill Carmichael, division director of Housing First at Friendship Place, one of the organizations involved with Veterans NOW, says homelessness frequently strikes the veteran population because of the difficulty they have transitioning to civilian life from the high-stress military lifestyle.

"You come back and there's untreated mental health, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], trauma," she explained. "I think going through all of your resources and your support system, eventually you end up in that place where you don't have anything left."

With the Veterans NOW program, home-

less veterans enter personal information — such as their history of homelessness and their family life — into a universal service prioritization decision assistance tool. Then the veteran is scored to determine whether rapid re-housing or permanent supportive housing is the best solution.

Kurt Runge, director of advocacy at Miriam's Kitchen, another organization in Veterans NOW, believes this model could be adapted to serve the needs of other members of the homeless population.

"Not only can we end chronic veteran homelessness, but we can end all homelessness," he said.

YES!

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CCNV Shelter May be Rebuilt on Same Property

By Rachel Cain
Editorial Intern

A replacement building for the Federal City Shelter may be constructed in the parking lot next to the current structure. At a public oversight roundtable held on July 8 to consider the future of the shelter, a number of witnesses strongly supported replacing the current shelter with a new one on the same property.

The 1,350 bed facility is commonly known as CCNV, which stands for the Community for Creative Non-Violence, the anti-war and anti-poverty group that transformed the former federal college building into a homeless shelter nearly 30 years ago. The shelter, which houses five different nonprofits dedicated to serving the poor and homeless populations, is located in downtown Washington at Second and D Streets NW.

The federal government turned the building over to the District in 1986 with the requirement that the property be used to serve the homeless population for the next 30 years. With that requirement set to expire, the DC City Council convened a CCNV Task Force comprising representatives from homeless advocacy groups and government agencies to draw up a plan for the shelter's future. The group held a series of meetings over the past year to discuss various options and to look at models being used in other cities to provide shelter, housing and other services to the homeless.

The current structure for the CCNV shelter is deteriorating, raising questions about its continuing viability. Last month, the task force unveiled a statement of principles that includes 17 guidelines for the redevelopment or redesign of the shelter. The principles include the task force's finding that any replacement shelter should be located either at the current site or elsewhere downtown near transportation services. The task force also recommended that any replacement shelter should be fully operational before the existing one is torn down.

During the roundtable discussion speak-



Eric Sheptock, a representative from Shelter Housing and Respectful Change, testifies at the roundtable meeting.

ers disagreed about the importance of saving the current building. Longtime shelter resident Eric Sheptock, an ex-officio member of the task force and representative from the homeless advocacy group Shelter Housing and Respectful Change, reminded listeners that planners should not rule out the possibility of renovating the shelter.

Brian Hanlon, the Director of DC's Department of General Services, strongly advised the task force to replace CCNV with a new shelter building.

"Buildings of this vintage are very difficult to keep going," Hanlon said. "It's lived beyond its useful life."

The current building features shared bathrooms and dining rooms as well as large rooms with long rows of bunks, arranged in typical emergency shelter style. A new structure might include more space for permanent supportive housing, said task force member Rich Bradley who serves as executive director of the DowntownDC Business Improvement District. In response to a survey conducted by the task force, many men and women current-



The 1,350 bed CCNV shelter may be rebuilt in the adjacent parking lot.

PHOTO BY RACHEL CAIN

ly using the shelter expressed a hope for a more permanent type of housing.

Patricia Fugere, an ex-officio member of the task force and the executive director of the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, explained that the 159 shelter residents who responded to a written survey distributed by the task force ranked affordable housing as their highest priority. They placed temporary shelter and temporary housing as their lowest priority.

"The shelter is not just a facility, but has become a home," Fugere said. "The respondents want a real home."

DC Councilmember Graham (D-Ward One), however, said the task force should carefully consider whether a new shelter's emphasis should be on permanent affordable housing. To use the site for housing, he argued, would amount to telling homeless people where they had to live.

"I want people to be involved in where they go," he said. "We need to treat people with dignity and respect."

Graham noted that although the property, located on prime downtown real estate, is very valuable, the task force saw the wisdom in keeping the shelter in the same area rather than selling the property.

"There is an absolute commitment by the DC government to continue to provide

services for the homeless from this location," Graham said.

Following a series of community meetings, some of CCNV's neighbors have also voiced support for keeping the shelter in the area. Graham said one of them has even expressed a willingness to contribute financially to assist with the construction

"The shelter is not just a facility, but has become a home. The [shelter residents] want a real home."

-Patricia Fugere, Executive Director of the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless

costs for the new shelter.

Any redesign of the shelter will also include, to the fullest extent possible, nonshelter services such as the job training, health care and sobriety programs included in the current facility.

The shelter residents who responded to the survey reported that they most valued the employment services.

"As we redesign [the shelter], [vocational training] will be reincorporated as the central focus," Graham said.

The CCNV Task Force's statement of principles will be presented to the city council's human services committee after the government's summer recess. Then, further progress will be made to redesign the CCNV shelter to best serve the homeless population.

"We have a vision to not just provide shelter, but also uplifting services that help people move out of homelessness and into self-sufficiency," said Graham.



DC Councilmember Graham presides at a roundtable meeting about the CCNV shelter.

PHOTO BY RACHEL CAIN



Rico Harris, Executive Director of the CCNV. PHOTO BY RACHEL CAIN

Playground at DC General a “Victory for Children”

By Hannah Roop
Editorial Intern

At the District’s family shelter at the former DC General hospital, a new playground will soon be taking shape, offering the promise of much-needed fun and exercise to nearly 500 homeless children.

A DC City Council hearing earlier this month that focused on issues including conditions at the shelter, June Locker, who serves as development director of capital construction projects for the DC Department of General Services, announced that plans to build the playground are under way. Construction is expected to be completed by October. The announcement came as welcome news to advocates for homeless children.

“We found out when everyone else did,” said Heather Wade, Homeless Children’s Playtime Project Site Manager at DC General. The program works with teams of volunteers to bring recreational activities to homeless children throughout the city. While the Playtime Project has urged city officials to build a playground at the shelter, Wade emphasized that the organization has not been a lone voice in supporting the playground.

“It’s been months, even years, of parents and other people noticing that kids didn’t have a safe place to play,” Wade said.

Deteriorating conditions at DC General received heightened media attention after 8-year-old Relisha Rudd disappeared from the shelter in March. Police never located the little girl, who was last seen

with a shelter janitor. The janitor was later found dead of an apparent suicide.

In testimony at a July 9 hearing, mothers Arriana Foulcon and Shawnikka Jackson testified about the hardships of raising children at the shelter. Both expressed concern about the lack of safe places to play at the facility and both said they were afraid to let their young children out of their sight, even to play with other children in the shelter.

Currently, the parking lot that surrounds the aging hospital building is littered with broken glass, cigarette stubs, and other trash. Trekking to the nearest playground requires crossing a major road. Concern for their children’s ability to play was important to both Foulcon and Jackson, but both also stressed their belief that DC General is not a good place for families to live and raise their children, with or without a playground.

City officials, including DC Mayor Vincent

Gray agree the shelter is far from ideal.

“I would like to shut it down,” Gray said in his budget address earlier this year. Officials have focused their efforts on moving families out of DC General into safe and stable apartments (see story below.) But the work is going slowly. With the prospect of additional families entering the shelter system in the coming months, DC General is expected to remain in use.

Programs such as the Playtime Project seek to help children find opportunities to play in spite of the hardships their families are facing.

Volunteers bearing storybooks, craft supplies, toys and costumes set up temporary play areas in the old hospital and children clamor to join in the fun. On a recent day, surrounded by laughing, face-painted, three-foot-tall DC General residents taking full advantage of a playtime session, Heather Wade called the playground “a victory for children.”

To the kids at DC General, a playground is not about politics; healthy play is something many children take for granted. Yet it is an important part of childhood that can get lost when a family becomes homeless.

“Children get caught in the crossfire of social and political battles. It’s hard to help a kid understand why they don’t have a playground,” Wade explained.

At a July 2 hearing, Dr. Darlene Lawrence, medical director at Unity Healthcare, testified to the heightened medical problems afflicting homeless children. The clinic serves homeless and low income patients, including the DC General community, and doctors have noted a higher prevalence of asthma and obesity among homeless children because of unstable housing situations, unhealthy diet, and the lack of a place to play and exercise.

Wade also noted the effect on a child’s developmental health. During childhood, “each day is important to development,” and play is essential for helping children develop “motor skills, and social and emotional skills,” she said.

Part of Playtime Project’s philosophy is using play to counter the damaging effects of the trauma of homelessness.

During a recent playtime session at DC General, one of the boys in the playroom handed a volunteer a safety helmet, the type a construction worker might wear.

The volunteer asked the boy what he was playing.

“We’re building a park,” he explained with a wide smile.



Where the new playground will be constructed. Shelter to the left.

PHOTO BY HANNAH ROOP

500 Families Effort Progressing, Yet Many Placements Still Needed

By Ben Wrobel, Volunteer

When Mayor Vincent Gray announced his ambitious 500 Families, 100 Days initiative last spring, some imagined that within three months, the majority of homeless families in the city’s shelter system would be moved into safe and stable apartments.

Recently, DC City Council member Jim Graham convened a hearing where the Interim Director of the DC Department of Human Services, Deborah Carroll, explained that moving the majority of homeless families out of the shelter system within that short period was never the plan.

Carroll explained that the 100-day deadline referred to identifying 500 suitable apartments. She stated that by the end of 100 days, 459 apartment units had passed the initial screening phase and 198 families had been placed in housing.

Carroll acknowledged that those numbers might seem modest compared to original expectations and estimated that the remaining 261 apartments would be

occupied by families by fall.

In his remarks at the hearing, Graham, who oversees homeless services as chairman of the city council’s human services committee, expressed a larger concern about the DC General family shelter, which has a capacity to serve roughly 290 families.

He noted that the “500 Families” program was intended to transfer families out of the shelter in time for winter in order to avoid a repeat of last year’s overcrowding, when harsh temperatures forced the District to place additional homeless families in area motels, where more than 300 families remained in May.

Graham noted that the 500 Families program’s limited success in moving families out of the shelter system meant that in the coming winter the District will be in no better position than last year to handle the crowds. As of July 8, there were 240 families in DC General with 220 families still in overflow hotel rooms, including 887 children.

“We’re not caring for these children as they deserve to be cared for,” he said.

As homeless parents spoke at the hearing, one challenge to the success of the “500 Families, 100 Days” program became apparent.

Under the initiative’s “rapid rehousing” model, the city offers subsidized rent for a limited period of time while family members search for steady work. Shawna Jackson, who has stayed at DC General for the past three months, said that she had been offered temporary housing under the program but turned it down. Her concern was that the city would subsidize her rent for only four months to a year, and after that she would be stuck in an apartment she could not afford. Jackson, who wants to go to school to be an RN, was not prepared to take the risk.

“My children and I need a stable option,” she said. “I need set plans so I do not end up homeless again.”

Carroll responded that it is possible

for families to continue receiving subsidized rent for more than twelve months if they show they are working toward their goals.

Jackson’s concerns are shared by another constituency crucial to the success of the program, landlords. At a launch event for “500 Families” in April, some of the city’s property owners expressed skepticism at offering their units to families who may be unable to pay rent after the subsidies run out. In May, Mayor Gray acknowledged difficulty in finding landlords who were willing to participate.

Another event in July demonstrated promising local efforts to create new housing options for needy parents and children. The nonprofit organization So Others Might Eat opened the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building on New Jersey Avenue NW, which will provide apartments for 28 families. The project is included as part of the “500 Families” program, though it was in development before the campaign’s launch.

Thrift Store by a Thrifty Woman



Betty Cain in the doctor's office where she works, pictured next to a poster by Jenna Espiritu. PHOTOS BY SARIKA REDDY

By Sarika Reddy
Editorial Intern

From feeding 200 people every other Wednesday at her church, to transporting dozens of free meals to low-income seniors, to running bread ministries and maintaining her own garden, Betty Cain keeps up a pace that would tire a person half her age.

Though at 80 and officially retired, she is works as a part-time nurse and full-time volunteer.

Because of her endless giving, the Riverview, Md. resident was recently honored as Woman of the Year by the Baltimore County Commission for Women.

The truth is, Cain has spent little time resting during her long life. Growing up as one of eight children, she went to work early, usually juggling two jobs to help her family. She has never stopped. She also has a talent for spotting potential that other people overlook. For example, Cain spotted an empty rundown house on the grounds of her church, Lansdowne United Methodist, and envisioned a way to help the surrounding neighborhood.

At the church, she said "we get so many clothing and items donated all the time, and I was taking them some place else. I thought, why can't we keep them in the community?"

She came upon the idea of opening a

thrift shop. The initial steps in getting the project underway weren't too difficult. The church committees approved, and so long as the store belonged to the church, Cain needed no license to open it. The neglected little house, however, proved a challenge to restore—an effort taken on by Cain, church volunteers, and occasionally, myself.

The house, which had once served as a women's shelter, had been shuttered for six or seven years. It needed to be completely cleaned and reorganized. It lacked heat and air conditioning, but the sweltering summer heat never stopped the volunteers. They were too driven to get the project done to wait for air conditioning. Fueled by cool water from the church kitchen and encouraging words, they labored on.

As a high school junior searching for some service opportunities to fill my summertime, I was fortunate to have previously known Cain, the queen of service.

"There's always something to be done" is Cain's motto. She had been telling my mom about the thrift shop project, and she needed more help. As an eager student, I was there.

The church's Arbutus, Md. neighborhood had character: homes placed close to-

gether—not quite a city but not a spacious suburb, folks sweating off the heat on their stoops, and trucks lined up against the side of the narrow roads. According to Cain, the neighborhood's populace is diverse, comprised of Latinos, African-Americans, and Caucasians of all ages of usually low to middle income.

On my volunteer days, I entered through the side of the church, through the industrial kitchen where Cain and other church volunteers prepare hot meals every other Tuesday. I usually found Cain wrapped up in the kitchen work, but she led me through the backdoor into the narrow, hot house next to the church building. In my time helping, I would scrub the walls, examine and sort clothing with a discerning eye, and wonder, along with the other volunteers, where we were going to get all the hangers that we needed.

I am in college now and the little store has been open for two years. Cain reports sales have been fair, with proceeds going to help the church. Despite Cain's efforts to advertise wherever she goes, the store's location, next to the church on Laverne Ave. does not exactly offer high visibility.

"We're off the beaten track," Cain admits. "We're not very visible."

Unlike more urban thrift shops, essen-



tially all customers are from the direct community. Cain also gives out free clothing to those who need it. Other churches will refer people to her, and she gives them what they need. The store sends out men's clothing to the Helping Up Mission on East Baltimore Street, where the organization houses around four to five hundred men at a time who are struggling with addiction.

As of now, Betty Cain isn't planning on expanding services. The church is at its limits. Despite any new ambitions Cain may have, she realizes that she can't tax the church volunteers too much; it's an older congregation. Even as the church tries to tap into the local high school youth, Cain just can't find a lot of young people willing to volunteer time.

But for any service she or her church can't provide, Cain has no trouble referring those in need. She remarks, "There's lots of services around- [you] just have to know how to get a hold of them." And the wise woman certainly does.

The Lansdowne United Methodist Church's thrift shop, located at 114 Laverne Ave, Halethorpe, MD 21227, is open every Tuesday, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, and 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 10am to 12pm.



Hondurans Flee Terror Aboard “The Beast”

Courtesy of Reuters

Thousands of kids are fleeing their impoverished homes in Honduras due to gang violence, heading for America in the hope of finding a better life. Many travel through Mexico on the roofs of freight trains and 52,000 children have been detained in the US after trying to cross the Mexican-American border in the last eight months alone. Much of the violence in Central America has been caused by gangs fighting for control over the illegal drug trade.

Driven from home by threats of gang violence and extortion and drawn to the U.S. by hopes of education and opportunity, Carlos, a 15-year-old from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, is stuck in southern Mexico, living in a shelter and trying to figure out how to get to California.

He says he has an uncle there, who told him that in America he can go to school and find a job. He says that back in Honduras there's a local gang that wants to kill him. He's thinking of climbing on board “La Bestia”, or “The Beast”, one of the freight trains that carry thousands of illegal immigrants north through Mexico.

Speaking recently from the rail yards in the town of Ixtepec, Oaxaca, Carlos is one of the thousands of young people hoping to reach the U.S. from their impoverished and violent homes in Central America. In the eight months ended June 15, the U.S. has detained about 52,000 children at the Mexican border, double the figure the year earlier. There's no telling how many have gotten through.

Another 15-year-old Honduran, Jeffrey from the town of La Ceiba, said he was on the road because gang members wanted him to pay 500,000 Honduran lempiras, or about \$24,000, not to kill him. Neither boy wanted his surname used.

“My parents had to get me out of the country,” said Jeffrey, speaking from the southern Mexican city of Arriaga last week. “The gangs wanted me to become a member, and they were extorting me. In the gangs, they end up killing, and I don't want to die.”

He and his father left his mother and two sisters behind and are now trying to reach friends who have already made their way to Houston. Jeffrey says he wants to be a lawyer.

They entered Mexico by skirting a border crossing on foot through the jungle, but are not sure of their next moves. They have no contacts in northern Mexico to help them and don't even know where to try to cross the U.S. border.

Still, they're taking their chances going forward rather than return to Honduras,

where the murder rate is nearly 20 times higher than in the United States.

Some combination of hope and fear is driving these children, but the hope side of it is probably illusory. Human traffickers are spreading rumors that illegal immigrants will receive permits to stay in the U.S., while some news stories published in Central America reinforce the idea that children who make it to the U.S. will be treated leniently.

Cecilia Munoz, President Barack Obama's domestic policy advisor, said last week that criminal organizations and smuggling networks are deliberately misinforming people of what they can expect when they come to the U.S.

In fact, there have been some policy changes in the past few years that may be fueling the rumor mill. In 2011, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) gave immigration officials discretion to weigh various factors in apprehension, detention, and deportation, particularly in the case of children.

And in 2012, Obama's administration said young immigrants who had been in the United States since 2007, and never been convicted of a felony among other requirements, could apply for a two-year authorization to stay and work in the country.

Young people who received this authorization, called “deferred action,” can now apply for a renewal. New arrivals, however, are not eligible.

The fear element, however, seems all too real. Both Carlos and Jeffrey said they felt their lives were threatened by gangs.

While violence has for years been a constant, Central American and U.S. officials say human smugglers, or ‘coyotes,’ often members of or in league with gangs, are convincing families that their children will be allowed to stay if they reach the United States.

It's big business for gangs and smugglers, who charge would-be migrants

thousands of dollars a head to pass through their territory and over the border into the U.S.

SMUGGLING ROUTES

Most of the coyotes are Mexican, operating along the border with Guatemala and brokering passage for migrants along drug cartel smuggling routes, said Mark Ungar, a former adviser to the Honduran police.

Migrants can pay coyotes and cartels between \$1,000 and \$12,000 to reach the U.S., and those who do are the lucky ones. Some end up in forced labor or the sex trade, while others are recruited to the ranks of organized crime.

After street gangs, known as “maras,” push many children out of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and other Central American countries, they often come under the influence of Mexico's infamous drug cartels. The most notorious cartel, the Zetas, is a powerful force along the major access routes to the U.S. that pass through the states of Veracruz and Tamaulipas.

Illegal immigrants present an easy target for the Zetas, who were blamed for the massacres of scores of migrants found in mass graves in Tamaulipas between 2010 and 2011.

At war with other gangs over drug smuggling routes and markets, the Zetas, whose reach extends from the Mexican border deep into Central America, see migrants as potential new members of their crime ring, experts say.

“The biggest risk these boys face is being recruited as hitmen,” said Mexican priest Alejandro Solalinde, who campaigns for migrants' rights.

(Reporting by Joanna Zuckerman; Additional reporting by Gabriel Stargardter and Simon Gardner in Mexico City and Caren Bohan in Washington; Editing by Dave Graham, Kieran Murray and John Pickering)



COURTESY OF REUTERS/JOSE DE JESUS CORTES



IAEA International Remediation Expert Mission examines the Dai-ichi plant.

COURTESY OF GIOVANNI VERLINI/FLICKR

Japanese Subcontractors Exploit Homeless Men for Labor at Nuclear Site

About three years ago, a devastating earthquake and tsunami hit Japan that caused a chain of meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant. Immediately, Japan rushed to find labor to decontaminate the affected areas.

In response, hundreds of companies were employed to deal with the contamination. Yet an investigation by the news organization Reuters has raised troubling questions about the legitimacy of some of the companies that were engaged in the work, as well as the treatment of many of the laborers hired for the hazardous work.

Japan has tight labor regulations and a shortage of workers. Construction conglomerates reportedly looked to subcontractors to help supply laborers for the cleanup job.

With little oversight from the top contractors, the subcontractors responsible for finding labor relied upon black market and gang sources to recruit and exploit homeless men to do the dangerous work for substandard wages, Reuters reported.

Only a third of the wages allocated by Obayashi Corp., a top contractor, actually made it to the workers, according to the Reuters report. The workers were set up in dormitories run by the companies employing them, with food and living expenses deducted from their salary. Laborers often ended up making less than minimum wage, with some ending up in debt to the companies once food and living deductions were taken from their pay.

Individuals deemed responsible for the illegal practices have faced arrest and fines, but not the top contractors that were associated with them, according to the report.

“If you don't get involved [with gangs], you're not going to get enough workers,” Kenichi Sayama, general manager of contractor Fujisai Couken, told Reuters. “The construction industry is 90 percent run by gangs.”

According to the report, one man, Shizuya Nishiyama, found homeless life better than the conditions he faced on his cleanup job. No employers was far too common.

-- Sarika Reddy

Crawford Gratefully Celebrates a Year off the Streets

By Sophie Alexander
Editorial Intern

"Welcome to my humble abode," said Anthony Crawford as he opened the door to apartment 310. There was quiet pride in his voice as he showed off the small place to visitors one recent day. This month, the longtime *Street Sense* vendor will celebrate his first anniversary in his own home after living for more than two decades on the streets.

Every weekday from 7:30am to noon you are likely to find Crawford selling papers on the corner of 19th and M St NW. That is the same corner where on February 2, 2010, Crawford's luck took a turn for the better. It was there that he met Reed Sandridge.

When the two men first spoke to one another, Sandridge was giving \$10 to a stranger each day in exchange for his or her story. He called it his Year of Giving, a project he embarked upon after being laid off from his job on the management team of a healthcare nonprofit. Sandridge kept a record of each donation in a little black notebook and shared the stories of the people he met in a blog.

It was on day 67 of this project that Sandridge approached Crawford and offered him ten dollars. It was there that he began to get to know the most basic facts about Crawford and his life.

Crawford became homeless when he was still a very young man.

"My mom and dad passed away. I was 25. I had some medical bills and I couldn't pay my rent," he explained.

After a troubling experience in a shelter, he decided to start avoiding such places and began sleeping outdoors. Even when the temperature fell below freezing, Crawford bedded down in a park or on the pavement, cocooned in cardboard and a sleeping bag. He did sometimes hope to change his life. The kindness of people helped him imagine something better for himself. One winter night when Crawford was sleeping on Connecticut and M St NW, a woman woke him up, gave him a cup of soup and offered to buy him a hostel room for the night. After spending a night in a comfortable room, Crawford dreamed of having his own apartment where he could sleep in a bed every night. He knew it might be possible.

Some among Crawford's "tight knit group" of homeless friends had managed over the years to find homes. In the meantime Crawford, who had been selling *Street Sense* since 2005, scrimped and saved money each week to spend Fridays



PHOTOS BY JANE CAVE

in a motel, where he could get a shower and a warm bed. But it wasn't until Crawford met Sandridge that he started making strides in getting a place of his own.

Reliably on his corner, selling his papers, every weekday morning, Sandridge didn't find it hard to stay in touch with Crawford. After getting to know each other the two decided to meet for lunch every other Tuesday. It was at one of those lunches when Sandridge asked Crawford an important question.

"A year from now - where do you want to be?"

"I want to be in an apartment - my own apartment," Crawford replied. Among other things, he told Sandridge that he worried he wasn't eating right living outdoors.

A discussion with Anthony's doctor confirmed the importance of getting Crawford into a safe home.

"Anthony has a lot more to worry about than what he's eating. If you want to improve his health, find him stable housing," the doctor told Sandridge. It was on November 27th, 2012 that Crawford and Sandridge officially started their search.

"I underestimated how complicated it would be," Sandridge admitted, looking back. The first three months were a learning experience. They put Crawford's name on the D.C. Housing Authority's waiting list, only to learn that the wait for

housing for a single male was an estimated 43 years. If he was even alive by then, Crawford would be close to 100 years old. (The following spring, with 70,000 names, the list was officially closed.)

"How does anyone take this process se-



riously?" Sandridge thought to himself. It was clear that they would have to find another way to get Crawford off the streets. Sandridge began reporting on their search in his blog.

"Most of the centers that we have reached out to don't return phone calls or don't follow up after in-person meetings. It's ridiculous," Sandridge noted in one post. Yet after pressing on for months, Sandridge and Crawford found the non-profit Pathways to Housing and staffer Elizabeth Horren, who they began to call their "superstar outreach worker."

For the next six months they filled out forms. Potential housing providers gave Crawford forms to fill out. Crawford completed and returned them. Then they gave him more forms. After filling out those, they gave him what he thought were the last of the forms. Crawford completed those, but then came more forms. Crawford began to lose heart.

"It was discouraging; I was really discouraged. But luckily Reed pulled me back together."

Finally in June 2013, right as Crawford was ready to give up, there was some good news. Horren told them she had met with Catholic Charities, the social ministry

outreach of the Archdiocese of Washington. Catholic Charities provides affordable single room apartments to people recovering from homelessness. One of their affordable apartment locations, McKenna House, had two open rooms.

"This kind of housing doesn't come along often," Horren told Crawford.

July 15, 2013, nine months into their search for housing, Crawford got the keys to his new place. Today, a twin bed, chair, lamp, mini fridge, dresser and television are carefully arranged in the small single room apartment. Almost as much as the home itself, Crawford said he appreciates those friends who have helped him through his journey:

"The people I met showed me they do care about me. It made me care about myself again. They showed me I didn't have to live like an animal anymore, sleeping in parks and stuff. I was sick and tired of it."

Now that Crawford has his own place he has recovered from many of the wounds of homelessness. For someone with a history of health problems and on nine different medications, proper nutrition is essential. Crawford is finding it far easier to eat well now that he has a place to live. Getting



enough rest is also very important. Sleeping on the streets, Crawford rarely got a full night of sleep.

"You don't know who's gonna come after you at night. I had to sleep with my back against the wall. I know for a fact that I wasn't gonna make it if I were still on the streets."

Along with this security, Crawford has recovered his pride; "I know that I can come home, stick my key in the door and

close it behind me."

Today when asked where he wishes to be in a year, Crawford, who stopped his education in the 7th grade, will tell you he hopes to obtain his GED.

He offers words of encouragement to those who are still struggling to prevail over life's challenges.

"If you really want it you can do it," he says. "If you don't believe me come down to 19th and M and we'll talk."

Soul Food: Spiritual Artist Movement Creates Community Change



By Jazmine Steele
Editorial Intern

Every famous social movement has an equally famous battle cry. A group of artists from one of DC's latest art and spirituality groups, The Sanctuaries, recently produced a song that has been rallying many advocacy projects in the city.

"Sometimes people think about art in a vacuum in terms of it's something to look at, hear or enhance aesthetics but the creation of the song and the performance speaks to the power of art to make change in your community," said Erin Johnson who helped produce the new anthem "Love Reaches Out."

She teamed up with other artists Osa Obaseki, James Bevel, Megan McFeeley and Rev. Erik Martínez Resly to produce the song, which since its release in early June has been featured at local anti-poverty rallies. A music video of the track, which has over 4000 views, was shown before the interfaith Waterfire event in Providence, Rhode Island, last month.

The process of creating the song was deeply reflective and spiritual for the artists. They were challenged to unpack their beliefs about concepts like love, community and God's place in the midst

of all that. In the video, Obaseki was filmed walking through DC's Chinatown neighborhood hugging people randomly in the streets.

"Reaching out and embracing is typically always a form of love," Obaseki said. "Hugs were just one visual way to depict it. To give dap (a warm greeting), a hug or a handshake, it all requires reaching out."

All the hugs invoke a warm sense of community and camaraderie in the video, but what the viewers don't see is all the work that went into approaching people for a hug and the opposition that came along with it.

"It shows that really, you reach out even when that love isn't reciprocated," Erik Martínez Resly, lead organizer of The Sanctuaries said. "There was a certain resilience you had to have for us to get that footage. I see the creation of the video as an expression of the video's purpose."

This project serves as a model for the new ways people are connecting with spirituality and their communities. The Sanctuaries is a spiritually diverse group of artists dedicated to community building and personal growth. Resly, a Harvard Divinity graduate and ordained minister in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, began the group in late 2012.

The Sanctuaries isn't about dogmatic religion. It's about passion, creativity,

relationships, soul and experiencing the sacred in new ways. These experiences are both universal and personal. The outcome is what happens when people truly use their talents for the greater good of society.

"It drives us towards inclusivity while maintaining the integrity of our individual experiences," Resly said. "I really think

What the viewers don't see is all the work that went into approaching people for a hug and the opposition that came along with it.

that's something that sits at the heart of this community: to genuinely be welcoming and genuinely invite and celebrate the differences without eradicating them."

In a world facing shrinking churches and the rising number of "nones" or people with no formal religion, The Sanctuaries provides a place for people to create, collaborate and connect with the community. In the interim, there's a self-actualization process taking place as artists use their gifts to inspire others.

"The Sanctuaries is a community that fosters love," Obaseki said. "We did this for our community and community of artists. We did this to show what's possible with us."

When artists come together for a cause it's sure to have impact. Resly and the artists of The Sanctuaries believe art will be influential in creating change in communities city by city.

"Our love reaching out is inviting those stories, those songs and art to come out from the woodwork," Resly said. "We want to bring the soul and celebrate the soul in this city."

Check out "Love Reaches Out" on YouTube. For more information about The Sanctuaries, visit www.thesanctuaries.org

Jazmine Steele is a multimedia journalist and Urban Fellow pursuing a Masters of Divinity at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. She blogs at Nobaddnews.com and randomly tweets @JazzSteele. Email her your good news at jazminesteele1@gmail.com.

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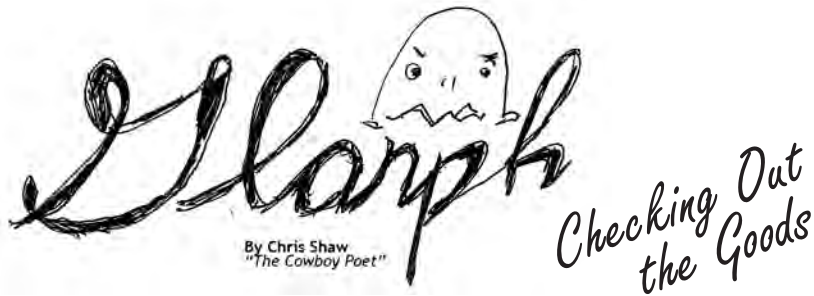




BARNEY & CLYDE IS A COMIC STRIP ABOUT AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN A HOMELESS MAN AND A TYCOON. IT'S ABOUT OUR MODERN, POLARIZED ECONOMY OF HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS. IT RE-EXAMINES TRADITIONAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS, FAILURE, AND THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS: GENE WEINGARTEN IS A COLLEGE DROPOUT AND THE NATIONALLY SYNDICATED HUMOR COLUMNIST FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. DAN WEINGARTEN IS A FORMER COLLEGE DROPOUT AND A CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENT MAJORING IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. MANY THANKS TO GENE WEINGARTEN AND THE WASHINGTON POST WRITER'S GROUP FOR ALLOWING STREET SENSE TO RUN BARNEY & CLYDE.



Know Your Rights!

John "Mick" Matthews, *Vendor*



One of the biggest obstacles homeless people face on a daily basis is harassment by law enforcement officials. This harassment is unnecessary and illegal and stems from a lack of knowledge of people's rights. The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless has released a pamphlet, "Facts About Street Rights," that details the rights homeless individuals in the District need to know they have, from which the following information has been gleaned.

The first thing any homeless individual needs to know is that "loitering" or "vagrancy" is not considered a crime in the District. Police are not authorized to stop, detain or arrest you for simply being in a public place, such as a sidewalk. Nor can they demand to see identification if you are not doing anything illegal.

Panhandling is a legal right in the District, as long as it is not done "aggressively." Aggressive panhandling includes touching and/or threatening anyone, continuing to ask for money after first being denied, or blocking someone's way. It is also illegal to panhandle on private property, within 10 feet of an ATM, or within 15 feet of Metro property. You may not panhandle from someone in a car, nor in exchange for cleaning a car or reserving a parking spot.

Lying down and/or sleeping in public is generally legal. The notable exception is federal parkland, which includes McPherson Square, Rock Creek Park, Lafayette

Square and the National Mall. When sleeping, one cannot block the sidewalk, nor can one sleep in a car, tent or other "temporary abode."

If one is stopped by the police and is not told he is suspected of a crime, one does not have to answer questions nor show ID (MPD General Order 304-10). Police may not frisk you or search your belongings unless they reasonably suspect you have committed a crime or are carrying a weapon. Appearing homeless is NOT reasonable cause for a search.

Personal property taken by city workers or law enforcement officials during a "clean-up" must be treated with respect and cannot be damaged, hidden, or destroyed. One has the right to have such property held for thirty days if it is considered valuable.

Homeless individuals have a right to "be peacefully" in any public place (MPD General Order 308-14). As long as one is not completely blocking a public passageway (i.e., a sidewalk), one cannot be arrested for "failure to move on."

When dealing with the police, make sure to get the names and badge numbers of all officers involved and save all documents, such as tickets or warnings. If you feel as though you are illegally being harassed by the law enforcement, you can contact Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (202-328-5500) or the Office of Police Complaints (202-727-3838).

Events for the spreading of this knowledge are in the works, so keep your eyes open for them. If you would like a copy of "Facts About Street Rights," contact the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless at the number above.

Should the Redskins Change Their Name?

Leonard C. Hyater, Jr., *Vendor*



My name is Leonard Hyater and I was born in Washington, DC. I have been a Redskins fan ever since I was born. I don't think the name "Redskins" should be changed.

The reason I believe this is because it has been over 40 years since the name has been a trademark. I don't think it's fair that the government takes away this trademark after it has become a tradition. Some people think the name is offensive. I do not see anything offensive in this long tradition.

When I was a little boy, every Sunday my family and I as well as the majority of other DC families would have dinner and watch the Redskins game. Also, whenever I saw a movie where it was the Indians

versus the cowboys, I rooted for the Indians. I never liked the cowboys; I am a true die-hard Redskins fan. The Redskins are part of the culture here; we grew up with this team.



For these reasons I believe the name Redskins should stay the same as it has for the past 40 years. We have come to know and love this team, the Redskins. It's been the name for over 40 years. It is now a tradition.

Bleeding Hearts: Real Blood vs Phony Liberalism

Jeffrey McNeil, *Vendor*

I consider myself a bleeding heart conservative. I understand hardship and suffering; I've experienced job loss, poverty, and homelessness. There have been periods in my life when I had to swallow my pride and ask others to help me. Although I am conservative, I'm not heartless.

In the grand scheme of things everyone originates somewhere. I was born in Ohio, moved to New Jersey, and forces drove me to Washington, DC. I didn't come to Washington because of soup kitchens and public services. I came here to improve myself. So when I hear people call immigrants lazy and freeloaders, I disagree. I don't believe people take long journeys that are dangerous, climbing mountains and living in deserts, so they can get free healthcare and public assistance.

Although I'm conservative, I'm a bleeding heart. My heart weeps for those little children, some only a few months out of the womb. If I could I would adopt a few. However, I'm still grieving over the loss of my father and grandfather.

Although I can't be on the border, I have faith others will pick up my slack. I believe in America; what I learned selling newspapers was that there is no shortage of people who are compassionate and caring. I learned that for every person who tells you to go to hell, there is someone ready to bring you ice water.

I'm an optimist. I believe in paradise, where the skies are filled with marshmallow ice cream and everybody fills themselves up with gummy worms and sugar bears. Although I want to save the world's children, I don't want to neglect our own children here at home.

I've never been critical of good Samaritans, humanitarians, and activists that are on the frontlines volunteering their time and using their own resources to help others. I have admiration and respect for people such as Robert Egger founder of DC Central Kitchen, Michael Stoops, a leader at the National Coalition for the Homeless, and Street Sense co-founders Laura Osuri and Ted Henson, as well as numerous organizations that participate in fighting poverty. I don't consider them do gooders or fraudulent leftists, but people that I respect because they've been there.

What I abhor is the armchair leftists who are similar to armchair commandos, neocons, and chickenhawks that sit on their couch eating Cheetos and potato chips calling for military action while never enlisting for war themselves.

I have more respect for real conservatives such as the Koch Brothers and Glenn Beck who use their money and resources in saving black colleges, donating to hospitals, and rescuing immigrant children as Glenn Beck has recently done than for these left-wing bloggers and media types that constantly whine about how moral

they are while everyone else is cold and callous about humanity.

These people are quick to demand government intervention, redistribution of wealth, and that others share in the burden of poverty. However, I want to see what they are doing on a personal level to help others. I want to know if Anderson Cooper and Chris Matthews have any black criminals living in their communities. I'm curious if bleeding hearts and moralists such as Chris Hayes, Kirsten Powers and Melissa Harris Perry have offered undocumented immigrants a minimum wage and pension plans to work on their television programs.

It's easy to be pious and self-righteous about immigration when your job is not being undercut by cheap illegal labor, or your schools, hospitals, and communities aren't being flooded with a massive influx of immigrants. While they accuse others of being xenophobic, I wonder what sacrifices they made to be welcoming to poor immigrants.

When I see these bleeding hearts demand others welcome the world's dispossessed, there should be a disclaimer on the networks showing the audience if they are putting up any capital behind the rhetoric.

Most Americans are not anti-immigrant. Many are divided and split on how to resolve the issue. Many are tired of our lawmakers spending huge amount of dollars saving everyone else's poor while our poor continue to languish in poverty.

We are endlessly told by politicians that big spending is crippling our sovereignty; we can't continue spending on public assistance for the poor. Then you see conservatives suggesting we use federal money to secure borders.

The immigration debate is not driven by nativist fears. Americans are frustrated with the inability of our nation to control its borders. They see this issue as a huge disconnect between the beltway and the American people; many view those inside the beltway as out of touch on illegal immigration. They want to know we have our borders secure.

They see the hypocrisy of those that propose amnesty and asylum for illegal immigrants, while the elites are the most vociferous; people see that their neighborhoods have no illegal immigrants.

Americans are generous; you see this all the time when there are natural disasters, but we don't like when it people confuse our kindness for weakness. It's easy to be a leftist with other people's money; however, what capital are they risking to help others? The American people will be more willing to sacrifice when they see those that can afford to help take the lead.



My Katrina: Part 15

By Gerald Anderson, *Vendor*

Previously: We woke up to a lot of shootin'. We were on the new side of the project and the shootin' was on the old side. It sounded like wartime in Saudi Arabia. They was firing automatic guns. Some people that was out in the water told us like 20 boys was shootin' at the National Guards, who told them on a megaphone to surrender the guns or they was comin' up to get 'em theyself. The National Guards had shields, stun guns, and bullet proof vests. That's what really made me get shake up. 'Cause remember we got families sleeping on the balconies. A bullet can come from anywhere and get someone. I know too many people rocked to sleep by stray bullets.

I called Calio on the radio and said, "We gotta find a way to get these folks outa here."

He respond back, "You right, man, too much goin' on here now."

But deep in my mind, I was thinkin' I still want to do more traveling through my hometown to see who else need help.

I told Calio to call KK because I wanted another friend with us in the boat.

We left some homeboys on standby at the projects to look over everyone, to make sure everyone be okay while we go out.

In the projects where we stayin' at, they have more men than women, so we counting on the men to take care of the women. We had some strong women helping also. The women saying, "We want to help too and make sure our babies safe."

So me, Calio and KK paddle down Saint Charles Avenue—where the rich folks live—to Canal St and the poorer area.

Previously the National Guards had told us we couldn't go no farther than around the Superdome. So I figure out another way to go.

Once we got to Canal St, the water kind of low, so we left the boat to go check out Seventh Ward, where my cousins and friends and KK aunts and cousins live. They all in between middle class and poor. Farther down is where some wind can blow away the houses, they so poor.

The water start comin' up on us. That's when I found out Calio and KK could swim. Not good like me, but they made it to this really high porch to go stand on. There

was no place else to go.

So we all huddlin' together on this little bitty porch and a man pass near in a motorboat. A motorboat, like you go out on the lake with! We all scared and hollerin'. KK took off his wet t-shirt and flagged the man down.

He invited us onto the boat. He had two sets of families with kids under blankets. I think maybe he kidnap the people, 'cause a whole lot of crime takin' place.

He asked, "Where you from? Where you heading?"

I told him we originally from uptown and we trying to go downtown to help folks. Come to find out the guy truly helping people too.

He asked, "Y'all want to stay with me and help get some families outa here? It's something the government oughta be doin'."

We say, "Sure."

After we ridin' around awhile, the man got to this big ol' hotel where people was hangin' out the window. A few National Guards around there give us water and food to hand out.

There was floods over the roof of the houses. After we seen that I told Calio, "We wouldn't've made it there with our boat, we'd be dead." The water hittin' the man's windshield real hard now.

It looked like we'd lost the war in Viet Nam. People all up in the chimneys, cryin', holding signs. The houses leanin' in the water. The farther down we go the more damage we see.

When I seen all that I say, "Aghhhh, like man. What is goin' on?"

The old man driving the boat say, "I can't go this way because that's where the levee is, the one they say bust open with all this water."

Meanwhile helicopters are all up brrrm brrrm, circling above. It not raining too much but we hear whoooshh like waves was crashing through tunnels. Deep waves was hitting the boat.

It remind me of "Jaws." That's how the hurricane was chasin' people. No shark behind them, but with the wind and water, they life was on the line.

We can't get to them folks on the roofs. They be sentenced to death up there.

To be continued . . .

Her Words

By Robert Warren, *Vendor*



Living life in these times and days sister Maya Angelou has passed away. As I wonder about the days ahead, Maya's words of wisdom in her poems, go

through my head.

Even with many painful and warring days, still I rise and give the Lord all the praise. I find it to be true what the Lord's words say, if you take a life it is as though you have killed a whole day. If you save a life, the blessings of the Lord will come your way.

A brave and startling truth is that everyone's deeds will one day be judged and weighed. The life you live will determine your days. A million man march to sing his praise. A plague journey will most men take, surely if he wanted, he could have lead all in the right way.

But the word went out as the angel sings his praise; man was given the power to choose his days. When Maya said I know why the caged bird sings, she knew there is a Lord of all the worlds who provides man with everything. But the heaven to come would depend on man's deeds. Sing birds sing the Lord's praise. May Maya's beautiful heart rest in peace, until the Lord raises us all up from a deep, deep sleep, with the angels before him still singing his praise. But then our deeds will surely be weighed for our next days.

May the Lord bless you, Maya, for reminding me to still rise and sing his praise to work deeds of righteousness and seek a just and equitable way on the Lord's earth all of my days.

The Tiger and the Lion

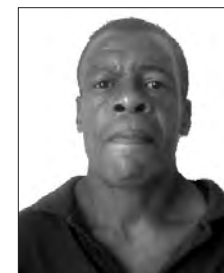
By Chon Gotti, *Vendor*



The traveler during the course of his journey was hearing the roars of the lions and the tigers. These roars were creating an astounding courage in his mind. His mind was filling with courage and confidence. He was listening to those roars with rapt attention and was getting tremendous inspiration. He was being strangely motivated. During the course of our journey, it is natural that we have to face the lions and tigers instead of being afraid. We have to face them and put them into our goal of achievement.

Moving On

By Charles Davis, *Vendor*



When I first started selling *Street Sense* papers, I really thought that I could get around to doing a lot of business. So, when selling *Street Sense* papers, it is best to

get started early in the morning, so that later in the afternoon, you can get on about your business and later on in the evening you can go back to selling papers. The best thing I like about this business is that you are your own boss. You don't have to worry about being late, and you can work all the overtime you want.

I have been in a couple of major accidents in the past and selling *Street Sense* gives me the opportunity to move on. Because of my hip injury, it's not a job that is a strain where I have to stand a lot. Also, I don't have to do a lot of heavy lifting and it gives me a chance to meet a lot of people. I like working for *Street Sense* and hope and pray that I excel through this and also find a job, because I am willing to do both. I really want to try a little bit harder to get off the streets because I am getting a little bit old for this type of street life I am living.

So, as I said, about moving on...Keep on moving and don't let the clock stop! Thank you, staff of *Street Sense*, for giving me the opportunity to be with the *Street Sense* family. God Bless.

Being Grateful

By Jackie Turner, *Vendor*



People take so many things for granted: getting up in the morning; being able to walk, talk, feel, and breathe. These are things that people don't think about.

Sometimes you have to think about the positive side of life. Thinking positive helps you think clearly and feel more vibrant. There have been many books on the subject. Thinking positive is always powerful.

Being grateful for what you have is part of being positive. When you look around and see someone who is less fortunate than you, remember that he or she could be you. Don't take your rights, your freedom, and your knowledge for granted. Instead, think what might happen if you didn't have your rights, your freedom, your knowledge or your ability to walk, talk, feel or act.

When you do that then you will know you have a lot to be grateful for.

The Mysterious Masonic Ring

STREET SENSE
July 16 - 29, 2014
FICTION **13**

Chapter 10: Preparing to Fall Out of the Frying Pan (cont'd)

By John "Mick" Matthews
Vendor

PREVIOUSLY: Kittie goes off on her shopping spree while Bill prepares for his secret rendezvous with Bowler Hat...

Later that night, I made my way to the Post Office Pavillion which was, less than a week ago, the closest thing Kittie and I had to a home. But now it was a rendezvous point to meet one of the most dangerous men I'd ever met. Living on the streets for the last decade or so, I've met rapists, thieves, murderers, hell, whatever dregs of society that had recently been released from DC jail or whatever penitentiary they had done time in. While a lot of those guys, even a few women, too, would have given your average subur-

banite nightmares for days, being on the streets together took a lot of the fear out of me. But the kind of money Bowler Hat had tossed my way just to catch my interest demonstrated to me that he could very well have been some kind of mid-level crime boss with a history fetish trying to be too big for his britches. Or, he could be exactly what everyone is afraid that he is: a regional representative of an international cabal of megalomaniacs bent on world domination.

As I passed the IRS building on Pennsylvania Avenue between 10th and 11th streets, I realized that for the first time since my first year on the streets, I was afraid. And rightfully so. I had an opponent that I wasn't sure I could outthink. One who probably had the resources to make outfighting him completely useless.

Unless I turned back then, I was committed to the greatest war of wills and deceptions that I could ever imagine.



ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN POOLE

In for a penny, in for a pound, I mumbled to myself as I decided against turning back and crossed 11th street. The statue of Ben Franklin stood majestically toward the 12th street corner of the block. Its pedestal, towering over even the tallest basketball player in the NBA, was engraved with many of Franklin's achievements: printer, philosopher, philanthropist, journalist, scientist, etc. The actual figure of Franklin was a little anticlimactic. It was about half life size but won-

derfully detailed. His hand raised, almost in greeting, brought back all those delightful tales of his powerful charm wrapped up in the package of one of history's most gregarious personalities. Tales of diplomacy, where Franklin's good-natured wit rang louder than the Liberty Bell.

And speaking of bells, the great bell in the clocktower of the pavilion began to ring. Truth of the matter is, I don't think I've actually heard the whole thing in one sitting. I'll have to get around to that one of these millennia because I didn't get around to it that night. After maybe twenty bars worth, I heard a voice from behind me.

"I'm glad to see you have some uncommon sense, Mr. Dickerson."

(to be continued)



Cawkins, the sleepy-eyed bailiff, emerged from behind a scarred door.

"Listen, ma'am. We can't adjust any of the intakes until tomorrow's sentencing hearing."

"Oh YEAH?" Skipper produced a fat wad of engraved Franklins from her rumpled white and gold Hermes bag, and Cawkins' bug eyes just about rolled out on the desk.

Skipper smacked the counter top hard with her ringed and manicured right hand, oozing with cash, and said firmly, "It's quite all right. I've known Sergeant Carlisle forever. Let the boy out--it's my personal bond!"

Cawkins practically slithered around to the front, stuffed all the bills into a large manila envelope, mumbled, "I'll see to it that Officer Carlisle gets this pronto," as he rattled his keys officiously, went to Cell 123-B, and released a very chastised-looking Billy Luck into Mrs. Marsh's solicitous ministrations.

Freed of his manacles, Billy watched in awe as Skipper commanded the desk dispatch phone and called in succession Whiskey Towing, Senator Marsh's home number, and an unknown limo driver who showed up in a sleek black Fleetwood Cadillac post-haste.

Once she saw the taillights of her wayward Buick Electra disappear into the muggy night dimness, Skipper eased Billy into the back of the Caddie and barked softly, "The Aquarium, please, Jeeves..." She bent over Billy's left side and pulled back his torn pleated sleeve. "Think that police dog got you, Billy?"

Billy, surprised at his utter calmness, replied, "Just a graze, I think."

She patted the forearm, folded his torn sleeve over the bruise, and continued, "We're going to mellow out in an aquatic environment, just now."

Billy thought, "What?! Water sports?" but thought the better of saying that aloud. The limo swerved right on Pennsylvania Avenue, where a very odd sight was taking shape. A neon-lit Ferris wheel and pastel-floodlit tents were being pitched for an offbeat charity carnival--all under the supervision of Box Williams, Ferret's long-lost father and a notorious carny all over North America.

Now the Cadillac and Jeeves sat patiently outside the dirty, massive Commerce Building, beneath which lay the old Federal Aquarium. Skipper had flashed her Senate badge to the guards, and they vamoosed out of sight. In the murky ultraviolet glow, Skipper threw her paisley shawl on the terrazzo floor for a love pad. "And there he is, Billy-OLD JOE!" As she drew the unsuspecting William Luck, Jr. to her side, Skipper breathed an amazing factoid to him: "This moldy critter almost DEVoured me nearly thirty years ago, down in the Mississippi outside o' Memphis!"

"Naah, not possible," exclaimed Billy, as she drew him downward into the folds of her shawl.

(to be continued)

Cowboy, Soldier, Pimp, Vendor and Author

By Ivory Wilson, Vendor



My name is Ivory Wilson. You may have seen the stories I have written for *Street Sense*. I am also the author of four books. My latest one just came out.

Before I became a *Street Sense* vendor and writer, I did other kinds of work.

I started out as a cowboy. I was born in Beaumont, Texas. At the age of 15 I started breaking horses like my dad, who worked on ranches all over southeast Texas, taught me. I started riding bulls soon after.

Then I became a soldier.

Losing friends to Nam, I liked to watch Arty Murphy movies: westerns and war. I learned how to shoot watching him. I decided to join the army at 17, thinking I would make a difference with my shooting skills. My DD 214 will show I'm an expert with weapons. I was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas. Not going to Nam was a letdown for my plans, but I owed the Army three years. I got bored. If I wasn't going to make a difference in Vietnam, I wanted to get out and start riding bulls.

But instead I became a pimp.

I was on post a year and had never been downtown to Junction City. They would come back on post late at night telling wild

stories about pimps and whores. I had never seen a pimp before. All I knew was horses and cows. One night my buddies asked me to ride with them to see all the pimps and whores. I wanted to see a pimp, but not to get involved. That night changed my life for the next 20 years. I became a sidewalk nigger: a pimp and a crook. Next stop: prison.

In prison I listened to young men talking about being a pimp when they get out of prison. I thought I could save some of them fools from themselves and wrote a book called "A Players World Manual: Wanna be a Pimp?" Those who read it changed after reading it - most stopped talking about pimping. They started talking about getting jobs when they got out of jail. I would look at them now and smile. I did a good deed: saved them from pain and wasted years.

Today that book is in the Library of Congress. It's been there sixteen years. Here in Washington DC I stand on the corner at 7th and E NW selling DC's homeless paper: *Street Sense*. I have been here 10 years writing stories and vending for the paper.

I have self-published three books via CreateSpace (Amazon.com), Lightning Source, Baker & Taylor, Ingram Books, Espresso Books, and Barnes & Noble. "A Players World" and "Big Mack: The Sequel" are memoirs of my experiences as a pimp. "The Magical Writings of Ivory Wilson" is a collection of my decade of writing for *Street Sense*, with the exception of seven family-friendly kids' stories. I am about to release these seven as an illustrated children's book, under a pseudonym (Sam Lee Tipton) in order to separate my family content from my memoirs. A generous supporter, a 13-year-old girl, is happily illustrating this book.

Roberta Bear's Journal

I cannot use any type of drugs or alcohol because of my addiction.
I can never use drugs again because of my self-destructive behavior.
I know that once I start, I have no control at all.

My addiction took me on a road to loss of finances, family, health and dignity. It resulted in me losing everything I worked for in life.

I would say to myself, "I can stop anytime when I am ready to do so."

But I was fooling myself.

When I tried to stop or control the drugs, I was unable to do so.

I would try to set limitations of the days that I would use the drugs. For example, I would do the drugs when I did not have to go to work the next day. Or I would set a time I would stop, like midnight, so I would be able to go to sleep. But of course, that never worked.

I would make excuses and scheme to get high once more. I would call in sick, leave early to go home to do more drugs. I would binge on unknown quality to get higher. I would steal from the job -- money or food and personal care items. I would spend all my money. I could not pay my bills or buy food for myself. I would allow people to stay at my apartment, though they would steal from me. I would go out late at night to find more drugs, even get drugs on credit knowing I could not pay until payday.

I had sex with my friend Pringle or with other men so I could get one more hit of crack.

My health issues -- knowing that I get depressed and have panic attacks when I use, the feeling of being worried and hysterical, didn't even stop me. It was a deadly cycle.

I would use drugs to escape the pain I was going through and end up in deeper pain. I would use because I was lonely and wanted to be accepted, but using drugs only added to my depression. I would feel like hurting myself, then end up in the hospital, because I could not take it. And when I would come home I would start all over again.

Eventually, I lost my apartment due to my addiction. People came over to my place to use drugs. They were loud and came in at all hours. My neighbors in the building complained to the management.

I felt very anxious and worried and also regretful when I used all my money that I worked for. Yet I became very angry when my brother Joel went into the checking and savings account and took the money because he saw a lot of money was coming out of the account on a daily basis.

I often blamed other people for my behavior, making it seem I was the victim. I refused to take responsibility for my own actions. I would say "why don't they leave me alone? I am not hurting anyone." I was warned several times at my job for calling in sick or leaving early. My supervisors at work threatened me that I would use my job if I did not get myself together. I lost interest in communicating with my family when I began to use drugs. I stopped calling my family on a weekly basis, and I stopped visiting on holidays. All my friendships fell apart when I used. I stopped participating in any activities with people who were not using.

The temptations arose whenever I saw the drug dealers on the street, or when someone came knocking at my door, or throwing a rock at my window. When the drug dealers were living in my house, I would see them on a daily basis. I just wanted to get high when I saw them.

I did not understand the problems my drug use would cause in my life. I told myself "I will quit tomorrow." Or I would say, "God, please help me stop!" Then I would take another hit of crack.

I was very angry at myself and my parents and God who abandoned me. Yet today I can say I have been able to work out that anger. Today I can love and enjoy life without the use of drugs. And today I have choices. I can call someone if I am in pain and need to talk. Or go to a meeting. Being real is more difficult, yet it is much better than living in denial. I am grateful because I am no longer destroying my life and causing others pain due to my drug use.

Vending vs. Panhandling

By Terron Solomon, Vendor

Are there any differences? Of course, I'm biased. I'm a vendor. I see panhandlers all the time and I ask them why don't you go to *Street Sense* and sell papers? Most say "I don't got time for that I'm trying to survive." I say with *Street Sense* you build a business for yourself, make money to better your situation, meet customers that can assist you in getting back to a "moral life," things that can help you get off the streets. Panhandlers have their spots just like vendors, panhandlers make money as well as vendors. There have been disputes over who makes more. Overall, I think *Street Sense* is more consistent along the lines of regular employment with new papers every two weeks, interesting stories about the homeless community, great poetry, and the vendors actually work for the paper they are trying to sell and are not just looking for a handout to get through the day. People are going to support the cause or person they think is most deserving of help, but I hope more often it's a *Street Sense* vendor who is out there every day working hard to get out of the situation he or she is in -- Just a thought.

Animals "R" Man's Best Friend

By Veda Simpson, Vendor

I was just leaving my N.A. meeting in Anacostia and was at the bus stop waiting to come to work. I saw a beautiful, small brown poodle running wild by herself. I called to her and she came and sat next to me. She followed me and my brother everywhere. I told my brother to take her home with him, because my 8 cats, that are bigger than her, wouldn't like the idea.

I bought food, a leash and collar plus toys. My brother said she was very comfortable at his house. A friend of his came by and said he had seen an old man walking her, so the next day my brother walked around the neighborhood to see if he could find the owner.

You know God is good... he found the owner. The old man just cried and cried. He thought he'd never see Missy again. My brother and I both felt good inside. I gave the dog's owner everything I bought Missy with my blessings and asked if I could visit Missy sometimes. With a big smile on his face, he said "of course."

And so goes another good ending to a story that almost went bad. The saying from the Bible I live by is "If I can help somebody than my living is not in vain."

Sickness

Larry Garner, Vendor

It's astonishing how surreal I can feel
Like I'm just a crumb
Like a memory that takes time and effort to recall

When I communicate it feels like air
The way people look down on me
Makes me not even care

My body feels so sticky
It craves something so sick

I just want to hide in darkness
So they can't see me cry
To keep my lies
Deny Deny Deny

Maybe if I could save the world
Maybe if I tried
They would never see past my mask

That I am a monster
That feels guilt
But not enough remorse to quit

Can I ever stop?
Or is it will?
Feels like I'm losing it
I feel so alone
Feel so ill

Is there a pill I can take...to make me feel well?



Vendor Progress: Making a House a Home

By Elizabeth Bryant
Vendor



Hi, my name is Elizabeth Bryant and I'm here to express myself again. The school I go to, Academy of Hope, is changing my program to a charter school. I hope its going to be in the same place. They said we are going to go for more hours at a time. I'm looking forward to going back in the middle of September. I really like it.

People have the wrong idea about living in South-east. I've finally accepted that living there is not a bad thing - and really feel better about myself. Now I'm trying to get a king size bed and a red couch. (Red is my favorite color.) Now that I'm feeling better about myself and my place, I want to fix it up so I can in-

vite people over that I trust. I finally purchased a cell phone too, after my sponsor and network kept telling me to. Now I can call my sponsor or therapist any time.

I've really been eating the wrong way though. I used to wonder why I was sick all the time, and I want to be more healthy. Sometimes I feel like I should go on a diet, but I really want to live healthy, permanently.

I like my work because there is not much drama. It's been really hot, so I try not to be out there every day. I am learning that people buy my paper more because they are really getting to know me.

Thank you.

Academy of Hope: 269-6623
601 Edgewood St, NE
aohdc.org



Bread for the City:
265-2400 (NW) | 561-8587 (SE)
1525 7th St, NW | 1640 Good Hope Rd, SE
breadforthecity.org



Calvary Women's Services: 678-2341
1217 Good Hope Road, SE
calvaryservices.org



Catholic Charities: 772-4300
catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp



Charlie's Place: 232-3066
1830 Connecticut Ave, NW
charliesplacedc.org



Christ House: 328-1100
1717 Columbia Rd, NW
christhouse.org



Church of the Pilgrims: 387-6612
2201 P St, NW
churchofthepilgrims.org/outreach
food (1 - 1:30 on Sundays only)



Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place: 364-1419
4713 Wisconsin Ave, NW
cchfp.org



Community Family Life Services:
347-0511
305 E St, NW
cflsdc.org



Community of Hope: 232-7356
communityofhopedc.org



Covenant House Washington:
610-9600
2001 Mississippi Avenue, SE
covenanthousedc.org



D.C. Coalition for the Homeless:
347-8870
1234 Massachusetts Ave, NW
dccfh.org



Father McKenna Center: 842-1112
19 Eye St, NW
fathermckennacenter.org



Food and Friends: 269-2277
219 Riggs Rd, NE
foodandfriends.org
(home delivery for those suffering from HIV, cancer, etc)



Foundry Methodist Church: 332-4010
1500 16th St, NW
foundrymc.org/ministry-opportunities
ID (FRIDAY 9-12 ONLY)



Georgetown Ministry Center:
338-8301
1041 Wisconsin Ave, NW
georgetownministrycenter.org



Gospel Rescue Ministries: 842-1731
810 5th St, NW
grm.org



Jobs Have Priority: 544-9128
425 Snd St, NW
jobshavepriority.org



John Young Center: 639-8569
119 D Street, NW



Martha's Table: 328-6608
2114 14th St, NW
marthastable.org



Miriam's Kitchen: 452-8926
2401 Virginia Ave, NW
miriamskitchen.org



My Sister's Place:
529-5991 (24-hour hotline)
mysistersplacedc.org



N Street Village: 939-2060
1333 N Street, NW
nstreetvillage.org



New York Ave Shelter: 832-2359
1355-57 New York Ave, NE



Open Door Shelter: 639-8093
425 2nd St, NW
newhopeministriesdc.org/id3.html



Rachel's Women's Center:
682-1005
1222 11th St, NW
rachaels.org



Samaritan Inns: 667-8831
2523 14th St, NW
samaritaninns.org



Samaritan Ministries:
1516 Hamilton Street NW | 722-2280
1345 U Street SE | 889-7702
samaritanministry.org



Sasha Bruce Youthwork: 675-9340
741 8th St, SE
sashabruce.org



So Others Might Eat (SOME)
797-8806
71 O St, NW
some.org



STREET SENSE
July 16 - 29, 2014

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COMMUNITY SERVICES



Housing/Shelter



Clothing



Outreach



Transportation



Education



Legal Assistance



Food



Showers



Medical/Healthcare



Laundry



Employment Assistance

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS HOTLINE

1-888-7WE HELP (1-888-793-4357)

SHELTER HOTLINE:
1-800-535-7252

St. Luke's Mission Center: 333-4949
3655 Calvert St. NW
stlukesmissioncenter.org



Thrive DC: 737-9311
1525 Newton St, NW
thrivedc.org



Unity Health Care: 745-4300
3020 14th St, NW
unityhealthcare.org



The Welcome Table: 347-2635
1317 G St, NW
epiphanydc.org/thewelcometable



Whitman-Walker Health
1701 14th St, NW | 745-7000
2301 MLK Jr. Ave, SE | 797-3567
whitman-walker.org



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- ☐ 1 Year: \$40
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☐ 3 Years: \$120

☐ I want half of my purchase to benefit a vendor directly

Vendor Name

Vendor Badge #

Name



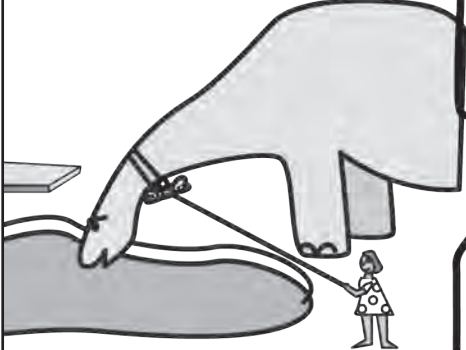

Address

Phone

VENDOR PROFILE: HEROES
By Hayes Cobb, Vendor

Heroes are people who put other people in front of themselves for the greater good of a city or mankind. We all want to be heroes, right? Well what about those people who are heroes that you never hear of in real life? I am thinking of the interns, volunteers and vendors who write articles for this newspaper: Rachel Cain, Eilidh Jenness, Sophie Alexander, Jeffery McNeil, Reginald Black, Cynthia Mewborn, Larry Garner, and countless more. I am also thinking of the people who buy *Street Sense* every time it is released every other Wednesday. They look in their wallets and decide to give their own money to someone else instead of keeping it for themselves. They realize that the man or woman selling the paper may be hungry or homeless or trying to feed a family while they are going back to a home and a meal. Washington, D.C., this is your wake up call. Find a way to help. Give that little extra, donate used clothes that just sit around, learn about the issues, and vote for the best candidates to help address the city's homeless crisis. Be a hero.

SUMMER IS IN BLOOM, WITH FALL COMING AFTER AUGUST. UNTIL THEN, BE SAFE IN THE HOT CONDITIONS AND ENJOY SUMMER!

FIND PLACES TO COOL OFF, SUCH AS SWIMMING POOLS, BEACHES, REC CENTERS OR JUST SOMEWHERE BY A FAN OR AIR CONDITIONER	ENJOY SNOW CONES, POPICLES, ICECREAM, WATERMELON AND PLENTY OF COLD WATER
	
BRING YOUR PETS INSIDE AND GIVE THEM PLENTY OF WATER TOO	DRESS LIGHTLY AND ENJOY SUMMER
	

BY SYBIL TAYLOR, VENDOR

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID SEROTA

July 16 - 29, 2014 • Volume 11 • Issue 18

Street Sense
1317 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Mail To:

Nonprofit Org
US Postage Paid
Washington, DC
Permit #568

Remember, buy only from
badged vendors and do not give to those panhandling
with one paper.

Interested in a subscription? Go to page 15 for more information.

**HELLO FROM FARRAGUT NORTH AND
CHAINBRIDGE CORNER MCLEAN, VA**

By Scott Lovell
Vendor

I was born in Charlotte, NC in February of 1961 and grew up in a middle class neighborhood. My father left our family when I was six years old, and my granny moved in to help my mother keep up with the bills. My mother was an accountant, and Granny was a maid for a well-known doctor in Charlotte. He would give us special gifts on the holidays to help Granny and Mom.

We were bused across town to school when busing first started, so I grew up around all races of people.

Mom and Granny taught me and my brother to love everyone. I have kept that in mind, along with what my mother taught me, starting me in church young to become a Christian. I was not a perfect kid. I became involved with drugs and alcohol at 11 years old. I ran with the crowd



and got in trouble with the law at 16.

At the age of 21, I was struck by two cars at two different times in the same day, losing half of my leg. Two trips to the hospital in one day. So I know God has a purpose for my life.

I have met a lot of people that ask questions about how I became homeless.

In 1996, I was coaxed into a crack deal, meaning I took an undercover police to buy some crack. I take full responsibility for my actions.

I was sentenced to nine years for distribution and six years for possession. But I never touched any money or crack.

In '97 I lost my brother, in '98 I lost my Granny, and in '99 I lost my mother. I was not allowed to go to any of their funerals because I was in prison in VA and they were in NC. That was very hard on me. So when I got out I had nowhere to go.

My church let me stay in the church we had just finished turning into a church from a warehouse. But I wasn't able to get a job because of my record.

So I came over to DC and slept on the streets hoping to get better help.

After four years of sleeping on the

streets and in shelters, even getting my prosthetics stolen in the shelter and being robbed on the streets of DC, God sent my guardian angel to save me off the street.



I am very grateful to Ted Leonsis. God sent him to save me from the streets and give me a second chance at living life again. God has allowed me to see he sends people in our lives to help us grow. Mary and Donna have been helping me grow.

A lot of my customers in McLean, VA and my boss Robby Banks at the Embassy Auto Wash have been very understanding of my health issues. My allergies are real bad. Tree pollen on the cars and the trees where I work is very bad. I am a winter baby.

I have met a lot of good customers and some have become friends who call or text me when they don't see me. Some of the intro that I have written about here are questions they ask me.

I have a son and two beautiful granddaughters in Charlotte, NC. Don't get to see them much because of my income. Last year a customer paid for me to go see them.

Sometimes customers will even buy me groceries and meals to take home. I am grateful for all they do for me so I want to thank all my customers and the people who support *Street Sense*.

If you want to make a donation to *Street Sense* or a vendor, you can mail a check to *Street Sense* with a vendor's name and their vendor number at the bottom or on the line.



My vendor name and number is Scott Lovell #445. If you enjoy my story, you can send me a card at *Street Sense*.

Thanks to all of you. When you feel down, go be a blessing to somebody else.